

SLIPPED CABLES

Drawings by George Wright

By S. TEN EYCK BOURKE AND CHARLES FRANCIS BOURKE

'E slipped his cable
An' 'e went out to sea—
All on account of Eliza!

T sure is tough luck," said Surfman Johnson, as he leaned back from his labors of painting the Ships Bottom powerboat, only to catch himself falling into song that lowered his spirits even more than work. "It sure is tough luck, w'en a fellow's got to welsh

on the neatest little hooker in Barnegat village. On'y what's he going to do when he's broke, and the bullies are broke, and a bloomin' beachcomber stands knocking at the door, willing and anxious to cut him out with his girl, and it's blowing too hard to run away to sea, anyway? Gee! but it's mighty lonesome bein' poor and honest!"

Johnson's logic was mixed, like his mental outlook; but a man has a right to be pessimistic at times, and Long Johnson, Surfman No. 1 of Ships Bottom Life Saving Station on Barnegat beach (and for the time being acting as substitute keeper of the crew in the absence of Big Jem Casco, the Captain of record), had just realized that he was the victim of an entirely new and original combination of trouble, to wit, love and the lack of lucre.

Ordinarily, impecuniosity would not have disturbed the surfman's philosophical calm: to be broke was Johnson's chronic condition. But the present situation threatened him with disaster as final as that which had befallen the tramp steamship Brazilian, with coffee out of Rio, when she slammed out of the storm the preceding night to break her back on the submerged rocks of Gridiron Reef, off the station, and make a giant brew of forty-two thousand sacks of Best Domestic Mixed—unless the wrecking tugs hurried up to take a hand in the salvage.

But just now Johnson had a very particular reason for needing money—a very pretty reason, by name Miss Molly Elliot, who, besides dancing eyes and tantalizing dimples, possessed a birthday—just three days off, he realized with a groan—which the prodigal lover had promised to celebrate, in part, by a jaunt to Atlantic City. And Miss Molly was not in the habit of meeting with disappointments—not with Harry Morton running a close second for her favor. Young Morton was the "beachcomber" of Johnson's soliloquy, and partner in a prosperous wrecking company over in Barnegat village across the bay, while the long surfman had only his scanty Government pay—and that three weeks away, and hypothecated!

Overnight, when Johnson confided his dilemma to his mates, the big men, eagerly grasping the opportunity to enlighten the victim in the difficult and devious paths of courtship, with a view to adding to his misery, had also added to his knowledge—and his hatred—of his rival.

"In this here sparkin' you got to give 'em presents f'r birthdays,—watches with blue faces an' bow pins," Yankee Evans explained to the neophyte, with cheerful disregard of the ethics of convention; "'sides payin' 'demnity every week, taking 'em to theaters an' outings an' such. Takes a rich wrecker like Harry Morton to rush the girls," Evans added with a grin.

"I heard Morton skipped out f'r 'York in a hurry; 'long of some trouble his wreckin' company's got in, so old man Bright said. But mebbey 'twas on'y to buy birthday presents," supplemented Little Welsh, the gun-firer of the crew, helping the good work along. "Anyhow, that won't help Johnny out. W'at with payday three weeks off, an' Harry Morton still in the running—Well, it looks to me like our Johnny's due to hit the rocks. He'll have comp'ny in them coasters in this howler. 'Ear 'er blow!"

LONG JOHNSON'S brother surfmen were still snoring in their bunks in the little white-painted life barracks; but worry over his brooding troubles had routed him from his bed in the gray dawn, and he had betaken himself to white-leading the scarred strakes of the big white motorboat, battered by the terrible flailing Old Ocean had given the life crew in the take-off work from the wrecked Brazilian the night before.

Welsh's forecast of elemental disaster recurred to the disconsolate life saver with a gleam of comfort in the morning solitude of the boathouse. "Mebby if she blows up hard it'll let me out on that Atlantic trip," he soliloquized shamelessly. "There wouldn't no money take me to sea, 'less I got to go!"

He dug down into the pocket of his tarry breeches and brought up a huge silver watch which he studied moodily, with the vague thought of hypothecating it, on the theory that every little helped. Shoving it back into his pocket with a sigh, he looked long and yearningly at the wrecked coffee tramp on the Gridiron.

Time, place, and condition all rendered a poverty-stricken lover susceptible to temptation; and the presence of that wasted wealth prepared Johnson's mind for

the wiles of the serpent—who had already appeared on the horizon.

"Times a man's most tempted to loot ships himself, things get that desp'rate. Wonder what kind o' mixup Harry Morton's been getting in? He's took to confiding in Miss Molly continual o' late. I thought he was sparkin' old Bright's girl, till he got to callin' on Molly, and—"

AN eager hail interrupted his gloomy meditation. A burly young fellow, red capped and peajacketed after the approved fashion of the wrecking beach, swung round the corner of the boathouse, boring into the wind, his keen eyes searching for someone—and that one obviously Johnson. The life saver's greeting was not cordial.

"You, Harry Morton! You come back from 'York to see what chance you an' your pardner's got with that coffee tramp? You can haul off: old man Bright's goin' to salvage her. He's cut you out, like you—"

Morton shook his head impatiently. Satisfied, after a swift glance round, that they were alone, he gripped the surfman's arm and spoke with an eagerness that surprised even Long Johnson from his calm indifference.

"I got a job for you, Johnson. You're out for the dough, I s'pose? It isn't going to hurt anybody either: private business of my own. There's a hundred in it for you too."

Long Johnson started. What Providence was coming to his aid in the form of his hated rival, the wrecker? He thought of the trip to Atlantic City and the "scrump-tious" blue watch, both made possible by that great sum Morton offered. A hundred dollars—two months' pay! Harry Morton wasn't such a bad chap; only—

"It's just to run out the lifeboat tonight, Johnson, and take a passenger off the old Cornwall—trans-tropical liner, Boston to N'Orleans. Passes here 'long about eight o'clock, you know. That's all I want you to do. It means a lot to us—to me, Johnny!" No question about Morton's eagerness now: the young fellow was fairly shaking with emotion.

Johnson suddenly remembered Welsh's remark of the trouble the wrecking company was in, and the business that had taken Morton, one of the partners, to New York. His hopes of legitimate gain, raised so unexpectedly, dropped with a crash.

"O' course, sure!" The life saver's tone was sharp with disappointment as well as sarcasm. "'Course you got a order from Washin'ton, if it's all right and proper? Nothin' short of a order takes Ships Bottom's boat out tonight—or a rocket at sea!"

Morton checked an angry cry. "Order—the devil! There isn't time. Besides, it's Saturday. Anyway, it's private business, like I said, Johnny. The passenger took ship at Boston by mistake. I just got word of it, and there's something important just come up. I can't get word out by wireless: I couldn't get him off with my launch, not with the sea that's making," he finished lamely.

Long Johnson laughed unpleasantly. Instant sus-



"Well, What Do You Know About That?"

picion of crooked work flashed into his mind. Surfmen and wreckers are never the best of friends professionally. Probably the other partner of the wrecking firm had skipped to avoid the crash, and the authorities had got wind of it. Of course Morton wanted to get him off before the ship reached port! He saw his chance here, since the old Cornwall, as he said, carried no wireless equipment.

Instinctively Johnson had sensed something more than a mere transshipment at sea underlying his rival's proposal,—a man who scarcely spoke to him when they met at Molly's house. Now, when he thought of it, he remembered Molly was confused the last time too. They had been talking this over. There was an understanding between the two, eh? Molly didn't want Morton to risk it. She didn't mind him! Maybe she'd sent Morton to him!

"Nothin' short o' that Rev'nue order goes—or a rocket," he repeated shortly. "If you're so anxious to join your partner, why don't you get aboard the ship and go along with him?" he asked bluntly. "Why don't you skip together?"

Morton looked startled. Then he smiled grimly, slapping the surfman on the shoulder. "I see you been doing some guessing yourself, Johnny," he said. "I did think of that; but I spoke to Miss— You see, it wouldn't be just the right thing. We'd better face it out right here at home," the young fellow said, flushing under Johnson's stern gaze. "Anyway, the steamer will stop only for you—for you or a Revenue," he added significantly. "And the cutters are all down south. Look here, Johnson—s'pose there was a distress signal out there tonight before the Cornwall was due to pass here? You'd have to take the boat out, wouldn't you?"

The question was practically a threat, and Johnson's jaw tightened. He did not dream of deceiving himself by asking for an explanation, what the man intended to do. He knew Morton's reputation for gaining his point. He was a man to take long chances on anything. The life saver understood, or he thought he did. The thing that cut him to the heart was that Molly—his Molly—knew all about his rival's crookedness and was willing to stand by him. Now, if only he was sure they'd both skip when they got ashore—if that was what Molly wanted— Besides, that would leave him a clear field with her—he hated to be beaten!

Johnson was sparring with his conscience. His eyes wandered to the open door leading from the boathouse into the adjoining station. The subdued rumble of voices, the thump of a dropped boot, and the stamping of feet as the life savers tumbled out of their bunks, making ready for the day's routine,—all the familiar sounds, mingled with the clatter of breakfast dishes, drifted out to him. The bullies would risk anything he proposed!

Morton was quick to seize his instant of wavering. He thrust an official looking packet hastily into his hand. "If that steamer won't stop for me, Johnson, heave those papers aboard for the Captain," he urged passion-

ately. "I've got to get that passenger off—it's life and death—The Captain won't dare refuse you!"

Next instant the wrecker had disappeared round the corner of the boathouse, before Johnson could refuse and hand him back the packet. The surfman stared frowningly at the big blue envelop,—it was addressed, he noticed, to the Captain of the Cornwall,—then he shoved it into the pocket of his peajacket.

"I reckon it's safe there till I give it back to Mr. Wrecker Morton—w'en I see him again!" he said with grim emphasis. "Matter o' life an' death, eh? Well, I guess Ships Bottom ain't got no call to be in at the death, anyhow."

IT was late in the afternoon, after a combined attack by the crew on the long surfman's amorous hopes and fears, as they thought, that Johnson was roused from his brooding thoughts. With the closing in of darkness the storm had risen. Great rollers were booming in on the beach, and from all the nearby life stations warnings were coming in to keep a sharp lookout for coastwise craft that would hug the shore in the brewing northeast gale.

From his post in the watchtower Johnson could make out the slow-moving figure of Yankee Evans, the beach patrol, peering out to sea. The boys were on duty, faithful and stanch—while he was plotting, plotting to help the girl he loved stand by the man he hated, plotting to help Morton do the "right thing"! Johnson laughed; but it was not a good thing to hear. He was beginning to regret his tacit understanding with the wrecker, and he listened to the rising wind with pleasure, even savagely.

He said nothing when later he glimpsed the specter of a big launch crossing the bay, as though bound out to sea in the mist. If Harry Morton proposed to put through his "innocent deception" on the crew in the kind of weather that was coming—well, he deserved what was coming to him, that's all!

"Him an' his darn launch'll get swamped, if he goes out in that smother—an' serve him right! That tub of a Cornwall can't make head in this sea. It'll be midnight before she comes down. What time is it, anyway?"

Eight o'clock. The steamship was due to pass Ships Bottom before eight. Well, let her pass, hundred or no hundred, Molly or no—What was that?

He caught his breath, staring into the storm-driven ocean. A red gleam shot up out there in the sea smoke. Before he could spring for the night glass, another thin line of fire shot up into the black sky.

A rocket! The instinct of the life saver was roused. For a moment he forgot Morton; and then from without came the pounding of sea boots, the crew running, crying the alarm.

"D'ye hear it, Johnny? They jus' give us the high sign for help! There goes a Coston!"

From a locker Johnson pulled out his sea clothes. He made for the boathouse, the crew at his heels, knotting their sou'westers under their chins and belting up their sea boots. In the clanging of the alarm bell the big white motorboat was swarming with men, Johnson in the stern, shouting orders.

"We'll get her, all right—we'll make a board into the nor'east and slam down on her!" he shouted. "Take along the bow gun an' plenty o' line, Welshy: we'll likely need 'em. Freeze onto the easy chairs, Bullies! Here's where we get mauled good and plenty!"

The powerful motor crackled, and Johnson shoved over a big steering sweep, disdaining the tiller with the heavy sea that was running. In the teeth of the forty-mile gale he swung the boat's head round for the swirling waters of the inlet. The curved bow struck the oncoming rollers and shot clear of the shallows, heading straight into the big combers. The men sat silent on the thwarts, strapped to their seats and staring through their hollowed hands for signals of disaster at sea.

For a long hour the white lifeboat held on, boring deeper and deeper into the black ocean, now breasting the full sweep of the gale, when the seas threatened to

swamp the little craft, now fleeing before wind and sea into the north, always drawing off shore with the speed of a fast steamer. The life savers' eyes were sore, gazing into the cutting salt spray, and they were stiff with the cold. Little Welsh's shout, from the bow, broke the long silence.

"There she is—five mile out, easy! She's jus' a blur in this smoke, more like a la'neh 'n' a sail craft," the gunner said. "Layin' right in the steamer lane, she is! There's a big stemwinder comin' down too, Johnny. Looks like the N'Orleans liner. Why don't the fool show a light?"

Even as he spoke a thin line of fire shot up from the sea, rising higher and higher, then dropped with a sharp downward curve. A flare of lights followed, alternately flashing and dying out in the murk, bringing a shout of rage from the Ships Bottom men.

"Well, what do you know about that?" Welsh roared angrily. "He ain't been waitin' for us at all! He's wig-waggin' the 'steamer-speak' code to stop! He come out to meet that liner!"

"He'll meet her, all right—the way he don't want to get wrecked," Yankee Evans said significantly. "There goes his lights out, 'fore she has time to make out what he's after!"

The flickering lights died out sharply. Evidently, in that gale that was whiplashing the ocean in mighty rollers, the launch had all she could do to hold on her course.

THE life savers too had their work cut out for them.

Of all the crew Johnson alone was silent amid the general disgust. For the first time since they left the beach he realized the farce he was playing. At that, he could scarcely believe that Morton, daredevil as he was, would juggle so recklessly with life and death. For that was Morton in the launch. Johnson had not doubted it from the first: he had known all along what the desperate maneuvers meant. The wrecker had tolled the crew of Ships Bottom out in answer to false signals of distress, and now he was going to stop the liner by the same methods. He was going to put Johnson through his paces, and he and his partner would do as they pleased afterward, knowing that he, and consequently the crew, dared not talk. He had tangled Johnson in a net from which the life saver despaired of escaping. And only this morning he thought he was badly off because he was broke!

"Say, Johnny!" Welsh's cry roused him. "That duffer in the launch is goin' to get run down sure 'nough! The old Cornwall's most on him, an' he ain't moved. Reckon he's mos' swamped in this welter!"

Doubt and fear vanished before the call for professional work. With a sweep of his brawny arm, Johnson whirled the boat round, heading for the blur on the ocean that he knew was Morton's launch. Good enough for the crook, after fooling Ships Bottom, if he did get run down!

As the thought crossed his mind the steamer's siren groaned. Then the beam of her searchlight fell full on the lifeboat, blotting the launch from view. Somewhere between, Harry Morton and his crippled craft lay in utter darkness, unseen by the liner, ten thousand tons of potential destruction hurtling through the night!

It was a race between the liner and the lifeboat, Johnson holding the big motor straight into the blinding glare of that funnel of white light. Suddenly its outer rim fell on the wallowing launch. In the flare they saw a man, waist deep in water, waving to them; then a bell clanged, and the towering hulk of the steamship veered slowly seaward—a second too late!

The swell from her bows rolled over him, broadside on, a solid wall of water, sinking the launch under his feet. In the swirling water Johnson glimpsed a pair of upflung arms. Already the lifeboat had sheered away from the onrushing liner. It was too late for her to turn in time to reach the drowning man before the suction from the passing ship dragged him under the murderous twin propellers; but a strong swimmer might. He

straightened up from the steering sweep, tossing off his peajacket.

"I'll get him," he said, "unless the screw gets me first. Serves me right for coming out to help Harry Morton take his runaway partner off that ship. That's what I done, Boys!"

HE was over the side with the last bitter words, swimming with all his strength. He had the drowning man in his grip while the ship still loomed over them. The swirling waters flung them both against her side, and Morton ceased to struggle; but the life saver's service jacket of Sea Island cotton held them both up. Overhead he heard men yelling for a rope, for a life preserver; but there was no time to wait. Johnson planted both feet against the ship's side, at the same time straightening his long legs like a jumping jack. The shock and the onrush of the hull did the rest, throwing them clear of the sea wash, tossing them a dozen feet away. He felt the lash of the propeller as it roared past, leaving them floundering astern. Death had snapped at their very heels, missing them by an inch.

"I kind a thought it could be done," Johnson gasped. "I'll be broke when I get ashore; but we give her a run for her money, anyhow!"

The lifeboat was on top of him; boathooks and brawny arms dragging them over the side, while the crew shouted joyous abuse. Johnson lay panting in the bottom of the boat, all in; spent with his tussle with Old Ocean and the liner which had slowed up, marking time, a dozen ship lengths away. Evidently the rescue had roused commotion aboard. Shouts and questioning cries came down wind, passengers crowding the rail.

In the lifeboat the crew closed in on Morton, listening while the wrecker talked eagerly, urging them to some plan of action. Johnson went hot and cold as he saw the men looking back at him, their faces grim in the shadowy light. Well—he didn't care! The bullies knew now he was going to sell them out—that he'd risked every life in the boat—for love of Molly and a hundred dollars! That was what he'd done! No use pretending anything else. In spite of his narrow squeak too, Harry Morton was still urging them to take off his fugitive partner.

Suddenly a guffaw went up. Yankee Evans sprang for the steering sweep, and the lifeboat shot ahead, working under the lee of the ship, a mass of light in the darkness. Little Welsh made a trumpet of his hands.

"Abo-oard the Cornwall! Sta-and by to catch the line!"

The growl of a megaphone answered from the bridge. "What's all this row, anyway? What's your trouble? You'll be foundered if you board us in this welter!"

"We'll shoot you a line an' board you like a Port Admiral." The lifesavers were tickled over something. "All ready?"

Welsh swung a coil of line and pointed to the bow gun. Plainly the officer understood; for the whistle sent up three or four blasts, they could hear the thump of the telegraph signal on the bridge, and the ship slowed, half speed ahead.

"Do you think you can make it?" Morton cried in an agitated voice.

The gunner laughed scornfully. "Make it? Like ridin' in a autermobile! We got to do it, that's all!"

It dawned on the wretched Johnson that the crew meant to stand by him—finish up the work he had started. He struggled up with some vague notion of interfering. Yankee Evans, at the steering sweep, pulled him back.

"You're deposed!" Evans growled. Then, as Johnson sank down with his face in his hands, "We got to fetch 'em both ashore now," Evans explained. "It's the on'y chance of squaring things with the Inspector for takin' out the boat, an' bein' so long off station. Now, Welshy, let 'er go!"

THE line gun in the bow cracked like a whip,—the gun Johnson had brought along for the same purpose, he remembered with a groan,—and the lifeline shot across the deck of the steamer. There the seamen fell upon it, hauling in hand over hand until they caught and made fast the heavier rope the boat crew had bent on.

Riding in the lee of the slowly moving ship the lifeboat was protected from the lash of the gale. Welsh swung his cap.

"On board the Cornwall! Swing your cargo boom outboard. We want to block a passenger off the steamer!"

The gunner's words created sudden excitement aboard the ship. They heard voices raised in argument; then the big derrick boom swung over the steamer like the outrigger of a man-o'-war, the boat crew seized the dangling tackle, making it fast to the ringbolt of the motor, and bent on a heavy pulley block, with lifebelt dangling from it.

Johnson saw Morton fumbling in the pockets of his peajacket, where he had flung it when he went to the wrecker's rescue. Next instant Welsh was swarming up the swaying hawser, with the big official envelop Morton had given Johnson back in the boathouse.

The little gunner was hauled aboard over the steamer's rail in a flurry of excitement and conjecture. His colloquy with the Captain was short and heated. It ended by the officer conferring hastily with one of the group of passengers who clustered near him, and then stepping to the rail.

"It's a fool job, and dangerous in this

Continued on page 17



"You Thought You Were Helping a Crook: You Were Saving a Stolen Bride!"



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a general way the effort must be as far as possible to fit the tramps in this group for employment.

At present the problem presented to a magistrate every time a vagabond is brought before him is practically insoluble by him. The boy traveling for pure adventure, or the battered, hungry, dirty, and misunderstood tramp is a victim of a pernicious system which can never be bettered by a short-time jail sentence, and the sure return of the vagrant to his former life of drinking, stealing, and begging. Only by committing him to a farm colony where he will be obliged to work and come into some human relations with the overseers and be wholesomely affected by new influences, can any determination be reached as to the class in which a tramp belongs and the surest way of permanently reforming him.

In cases where tramps have fallen so low that they are no longer sensible to wholesome influences, it has been found in connection with the European labor colonies that it is possible to subject them to the particular form of training required by their individual circumstances, and thus in time prepare them again to take their place in the industrial economy of the nation.

WHILE there are necessarily modifications of the farm colony system in Holland, Belgium, Germany, and Switzerland, adapted to the special needs of each country, the result has been to rid their lands of tramps. The first colony of vagrants was started in Holland, and originally included a plan of reformation whereby the inmates of the farms would in time be spread in homes of their own upon the land. As yet the Dutch colonies are not self supporting, and many difficulties have been encountered in the effort to reform the members; but it has been demonstrated that this system works to abolish the tramp evil.

At Merxplas, Belgium, is to be found an outgrowth of the Dutch colony; but it is more of an industrial village, with its buildings—all the work of the five thousand inmates—and manufactures of tiles, wagons, buttons, and bags. Every trade is represented. The farm buildings are models of cleanliness. There is an admirable system

of rewards for the members of the colony for good work. As may be supposed, however, the tramp labor is in part unskilled, and this has a tendency to cut down the profits from the industries. Moreover, it creates a condition of competition with existing manufacturing enterprises.

The ideal plan has been worked out in Switzerland, where it has been recognized that, while land is a difficult thing from which to derive an income in cases where tramp labor is employed, it is comparatively simple from which to obtain nourishment, and that agriculture is better suited to tramp colonies than any other form of endeavor. The Swiss colonies cannot be said to compete at all with either free labor or industry. All workshops at both places are purely secondary. The former colony is for forced labor only, while the other is a free institution. This has made it possible for magistrates in Switzerland to commit every vagrant coming before them, and thus to let the final disposition of the tramp's case rest upon his own conduct in the labor colony.

Many subcolonies have been started in Switzerland. This has served to help each community rid its borders of tramps. Best of all, it tends to emphasize the desirability of a small colony over a large one. The vagrants are brought into closer daily contact with the director and his assistants, thus permitting reforming influences impossible in a big colony. Again, the system of small colonies allows the inmates to occupy temporary quarters and to build their own permanent homes as needed. This gives them a deeper interest in the results of their individual efforts. Where they have direct participation in the prosperity of the colony, such as separate tables to which a different dietary is applied, this furnishes a stimulus for their best work in the growth of vegetables and fruit. By the time the men have about earned their freedom, and have been placed on a small wage basis, they are permitted to eat with their employers, to smoke, and to sleep without being locked in their cells. With their small savings and rejuvenated mental and physical state, they are able to leave the colonies on the best of understandings with the managers, and to start out anew to make their own way in life.

SLIPPED CABLES

sea," the Captain shouted, plainly disgruntled; but impatient to be on his way again. "You do it at your own risk—yours and the passenger's."

Little Welsh had wasted no time in strapping the life belt on the passenger, a slender, boyish figure, Johnson noticed, in a long raincoat, with cap pulled tightly down, and young—too young, it seemed, for a "run-away crook."

"On'y shows what a bad influence Harry Morton has got," he grumbled. "Take me!" He watched with a scowl when the block tackle lowered its burden into the boat, where the men caught the trussed up bundle of clothes and eased it aboard. Little Welsh came after, slipping down the hawser hand over hand, calling back to the officers of the ship, and followed by shouts and laughter—the sound of women's voices wishing them safely ashore and "Happy voyage!"

Even Johnson was surprised at the reckless abandon of the crew. They crowded forward round Morton and his "crooked partner," laughing and talking together; more like an outing party instead of the capture of a fugitive from justice, Long Johnson thought grimly.

"Tain't goin' to be no laughin' matter when we get ashore," he said soberly, "not for me—nor tain't for that crook Morton an' his partner, neither! I'll make a clean breast of it, if all of us three has to go to jail!"

He sat grimly silent as the lifeboat swung away from the protecting hulk of the liner, into the heavy seas that rolled them shoreward, thinking of what impended when word reached the Inspector of the night's doings. His mates seemed to avoid him openly. They had backed him up for the honor of Ships Bottom; but there was no doubting what their opinion was of his share in the wrecker's plot.

The thought came over him like an icy douche. Suppose Morton had tried to bribe any of the bullies in the boat besides himself? He smiled grimly as he pictured the wrecker after that attempt. He knew from the first that Morton was going to send up those rockets, and he let him pull the wool over the crew's eyes—just so he might have the wherewithal to put it over Morton with Miss Molly. Miss Molly! What would she say if she knew the source of his suddenly acquired riches? By George! He hadn't taken the money yet, and, what's more, Atlantic City and watches with blue faces could go

hang before he faced the little brown-eyed girl with dishonor—

"Hard a lee! We're atop o' the tramp! Jam her down!"

RIGHT ahead of them rose the wave-washed hulk of the wrecked coffee tramp, pounding on the Gridiron—like Johnson's own little love craft, foundered on the rocks of financial disaster and jealousy. In the laughing and chaffing, steering straight for the inlet as they were, none of them had realized that they had covered the distance back in a quarter the time it had taken to go out. The time of reckoning was close! Yankee Evans swung over the steering sweep, and the lifeboat stormed past the treacherous reef, shot through the inlet, and rounded up back of the station. For the first time Long Johnson spoke. Ashore he was still in command of the life crew, and he had made up his mind what to do.

"You take Harry Morton up to the station an' take along that partner o' his! We'll see what's to pay for this night's work!"

For a moment there was silence. Then, to Johnson's dismay, a burst of laughter greeted him. A voice—strangely high and familiar to him—cried:

"Of course I'll go along with Harry! Oh, Mr. Johnson—"

Half a dozen men interfered, and the voice broke off, smothered in giggles. Before Johnson could begin to grasp the meaning of all this, Evans and Welsh had him by the arm, hustling him up to the station. In a daze he noticed that Morton followed quite peaceably with his "partner."

In the glare of the messroom Johnson swung on his mates, who gathered, grinning back at him, with Harry Morton and the fugitive in their midst.

"Now," Johnson thundered, "what I want to know—what you bullies think you're doin'?"

Morton turned to his partner. "Permit me," he said with a flourish. "My wife—Mrs. Morton."

The fugitive slipped out of her raincoat. It was a girl, a pretty one, Johnson saw with a gasp,—old man Bright's daughter, bundled in a peajacket, and what, to his untutored eyes, seemed some newfangled kind of trousers.

"My riding clothes," she explained. "I had to dress that way to get off the ship. Even then they didn't want to let me come,

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nor my chaperon either; but I insisted." Blushing and laughing, she pulled off her cap, loosening a mass of wavy hair. "Who—what—" Johnson stammered. He could only stare at the pretty girl, who was laughing and crying together. "Jessie Bright, what you been doin'—you ain't Harry's partner at all—" "Oh, yes, she is!" Harry Morton sprang forward, seizing Johnson's hand. "I wanted to tell you on the way in, an' thank you, Johnny; but the bullies wouldn't let me: the joke was too good to spoil. You thought you were helping a crook to escape—and you were saving a stolen bride! You see, old man Bright thought Jessie was too young to marry; so we eloped. Then he fooled us, pretending it was all right, and got her on that steamer."

"Trying to send me south, with a chaperon—away from Harry! Wasn't it just too mean, Mr. Johnson?" the recaptured bride exclaimed indignantly. "But I got word to Harry, and he got a writ—a corpeous habus—the big envelop Mr. Little Welsh gave the Captain, that made him let me come off the ship. And Molly told Harry—" Little Welsh interrupted with a portentous frown at Johnson, and a wink at the others. "Molly told Harry, *Mister Long Johnson*," he repeated, "you'd be perfectly willing to sell out your mates if she asked it. An' seems she knows what she's talkin' about."

"But Molly didn't—Molly never said anything to me—" the bewildered Johnson began.

"Molly suggested you'd help us out," Morton explained. "I didn't know just how to explain things this morning—'course I knew it was stretching regulations, what I wanted. Then I thought you'd guessed about Jessie an' me, when you talked about my 'partner.' Anyhow, the hundred's yours—yours and the bullies."

"Talkin' about pay for this night's work," said Little Welsh, "I dun'no what Johnny thinks is right; but if the bride now—it's cust'mary, ain't it, Johnny?"

Johnson shook his head. "Don't ask me nothin'," he said weakly. "I'm like the fellow in the song. I slipped my cable when I went to sea. I'm the one that got sold, an' I feel pretty cheap too!"

But, somehow, Long Johnson did not look unhappy.

THE SEÑORA'S DIAMONDS

taken down early, if you have them ready. Your boat sails at eleven."

"They will be packed," said the woman. "Oh, by the way, how long will it take me to get to—what street is it, Adele?" she said, turning to her niece.

"Where we dine, Tante Louise? One hundred and fourteenth, number six hundred, west."

"About half an hour in a taxicab, Madame," said the clerk.

The ever-ready porter standing nearby hurried to the sidewalk to engage a cab for the women, and Madame Brouletour, with a smiling nod of thanks for the clerk's politeness, turned to follow to the street, when her niece spoke to her. Harris did not know French; but he understood the young woman's meaning, and was not at all surprised when the elder woman said, "Oh, oui," and stopped, releasing the fur from about her shoulders, and the niece stepped behind her to unclasp the diamond necklace.

Madame Brouletour, when this was being done, turned to the clerk, saying, "If you don't mind, Monsieur, I am going to trouble you once more to take care of this necklace of mine. It worries me so, with all the stories I hear of street robbers in your great city."

"Only too glad to relieve you, Madame," said the clerk.

"Ah, but it is too bad," exclaimed the woman, with the necklace in her hand, "that I have left the case in my room."

"No, Tante Louise," said the niece, "I have it with me." She produced the familiar Russia leather box from her muff, and set it on the desk counter, opening it, and revealing two small rings. "I keep my valuables in it too," she said, smiling apologetically for the poor little baubles, which indeed looked never so poor in comparison with the glittering necklace that she took up to place in the case.

The catch would not close, the rings taking up too much room, and the obliging clerk undertook to help her in rearranging the trinkets to give the necklace more space. The young woman's little white hand and the clerk's fingers seemed to accomplish the task together, and the clasp caught with a click.

"Thanks, Monsieur," said the little niece. The clerk passed the box to the waiting cashier, the woman saw it placed in the safe, the niece accepted the receipt that had been waiting apparently, and the pair of them departed.

HARRIS was not noticed, of course. If he had been, it might have been thought that he sought the sidewalk with undue haste; for by the time the women had been helped into their waiting taxi he had leaped into its counterpart, twenty feet behind the first, and the chauffeur was, so to speak, champing at his bit. And a strange thing about Harris's taxi was that he was not the only occupant, there being a short but husky person already inside, and another quite as husky on the seat beside the chauffeur.

"They're off," said Harris, or, as he was now again become, Peter Kenny. "I've doped it out that they'll make for a restaurant somewhere, its being about dinner time. If that's the case, the first part is easy, and the rest of it ought to be if we work it carefully. Say, we can't be there already!"

The taxicab had stopped, and the man beside the chauffeur was already tapping on

the window. Kenny at once opened the door. "They've gone in here," said the man. "It's the Richelieu."

They had stopped near a famous French restaurant, some blocks west of Broadway. "Go inside and don't lose 'em," said Kenny, and the man on the front seat descended and hurried up the steps. For the next hour, as nothing occurred in the immediate presence of Peter Kenny, he took things nervously easy, while his companion, the short but husky individual, slumbered peacefully.

But the man who had entered the restaurant saw several things happen, and when affairs had gone far enough he came out to the taxicab and reported.

"They met a fellow in the reception room," he said.

"A tall, slim chap, black mustache and very small, black eyes?" asked Peter Kenny.

"That fits him. The big dame runs right at him, like she had some good news to tell him; but the little one holds her back, and seems kind of nervous. The fellow whispers to the big dame, and she cools down. Then she slips something to the fellow, and he smiles, and they go in to dinner. I had mine too, and hurried through it, because they weren't eating much, though the fellow put three big absinthe frappés into himself and the big dame had some wine. The little one didn't drink anything, and looks nervous all the time."

"She would," said Peter Kenny. "Maybe she's got the same things running through her mind that I have. Well?"

"They're about through now," said the man. "And if you want to follow the dames—"

"Never mind them," said Peter Kenny. "Let them go, and— Here they come! Keep an eye out for the man!"

MADAME BROULETOUR and her niece emerged from the entrance to the Richelieu, escorted by a tall, slim, foreign looking man, who assisted them into a cab. It drove off, and he bowed as it departed. Then he buttoned his overcoat closely about him and started gaily along the street.

"After him!" said Peter Kenny. "Wake up and be lively!" he admonished the sleepy person at his side, who got out and joined the other husky man. Together they strolled along the street after the foreign looking stranger. Peter Kenny, in the taxicab, slowly followed.

The foreign looking man turned off the brighter avenue into a darker side street. The following pair closed in upon him. Fifty feet from the corner the arms of one stole softly but snugly about his neck, pinning him in a voiceless grip. The other stooped and caught him by the knees. Together they lifted him, and a moment later the slam of a taxicab door and the whirring of its departing motor were the only indications that a bold holdup had taken place in the vicinity.

Within the cab, however, matters were a trifle more active. The foreign looking man was inclined to resent the interference with his liberty; but, with two muscular individuals controlling his physical contortions, and the revolver of Peter Kenny pressed against his forehead, he decided that submission would do no harm.

"And it's a good thing for you, French Louie," said Peter Kenny, when he saw that their captive had arrived at that sane deci-

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